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ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION AND DIVERGING PROSPECTS FOR URBAN YOUTH IN AN ENLARGED EUROPE

policy recommendations

SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH EDUCATION IN ROMANIA: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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ABOUT EDUMIGROM

The EDUMIGROM research project aimed to study how ethnic differences in education contribute to the diverging future prospects of minority ethnic youth and their peers in multiethnic urban settings. It made a departure by recognising that, despite great variations in economic development and welfare arrangements, recent developments seem to lead to similar disadvantages for certain groups of second-generation immigrants in the western half of the continent and Roma in Central Europe. Although formally enjoying social membership with full rights in the respective states, people affiliated with these groups tend to experience new and intensive forms of involuntary separation, marginalisation, social exclusion, and second-class citizenship. By selecting specific communities and schools in nine member states of the European Union (the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), the project explored in a cross-country comparative perspective how existing educational systems, policies, practices, and experiences in markedly different welfare regimes contribute to these processes of "minoritisation". Considering that schools are key agents in knowledge distribution and socialisation, the project examined how educational practices in compulsory education conclude in reducing, maintaining, or deepening inequalities in young people's opportunities for advancement and their access to the labour market, and, concurrently, how they are forging the social contacts, interethnic conduits, and strategies of identity formation of adolescents from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

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This last chapter of the series of reports produced on the case of Romania as part of the EDUMIGROM project summarises: (1) the frames of national public and political discourse on ethnic relations and minority education, (2) the major results of the Romania-based empirical research conducted in two urban settings on ethnic Roma school pupils, and (3) policy recommendations for improving the social inclusion of minority ethnic youth.

Similar to the other participating country teams, since 2008 we have produced two background studies on policies (related more generally to ethnic minorities and interethnic relations, and more specifically to ethnic minority education), a report on the survey conducted in schools from two urban centres, and a community study report (based on our community and ethnic minority case studies); we have also participated in writing two comparative reports (one on the educational policies for social inclusion, and the other on the EDUMIGROM community study).

This very final paper relies on all of our previous reports, but it mostly restructures the main findings around the issue of (school) segregation as related to one of the most prevalent phenomena of post-socialist transformations (the production of inequalities among rich and poor), which is visible, among others, in the spatial/residential manifestation of socio-economic differentiation underpinned by cultural distinctions. In the case of our selected minority group (ethnic Roma from Romania) connections between social marginalisation and cultural devaluation are expressed in the way in which poor settlements and/or ghettoes are defined as "Gypsy vicinities", how "Gypsyisation" is referred to as a danger to economic development and civilised living, and how Gypsyness is defined as the radical or total "Other" that needs to be kept at a safe distance. Most recently, in Romania, the racialisation of poverty and of all negative phenomena is manifested in the newly reformulated legislative proposal regarding the denomination of "Roma" as "Gypsy" in order to avoid all the unwanted associations between Roma and Romanians.

Framing of public and political discourse in Romanian society

The general public atmosphere for Roma issues worsened in the last three years. After the 1990s (during which several anti-Roma pogroms happened across the country), the period before Romania's accession to the European Union (that happened in January 2007) was dominated by an optimistic state of mind. Majority politicians were ready to find consensus with Roma nongovernmental organisations and to accept the European Union's recommendation regarding the treatment of Roma as full citizens. Several national, regional, and local governmental structures were created in order to implement the government's strategy for the improvement of the Roma populations conditions (but without allocating sufficient public funds, yet using some financial support from the Phare program). The media celebrated these initiatives but expressed its doubts if the funds dedicated to Roma were to have successful results and if Roma were going to change (e.g., be willing to go to school or to work, to pay taxes etc.). Roma civil society

initiated and implemented a series of projects on education and health, later on employment, and even later on housing. This positive trend was interrupted after 2008 due to a widespread recession as well as the actions taken by Italy and France against Roma immigrants from Romania. High-level politicians (among them the state president and ministers for foreign affairs) started to voice racist attitudes against Roma and the media was ready to manipulate anti-Roma feelings. Romanian public discourse ended up being dominated by the majority's concern regarding the confusions made abroad between Roma and Romanians, which culminated in the fall of 2010 with a legislative proposal about changing the denomination of "Roma" into "Gypsy" (the proposal recently was approved by the human rights and equal opportunities commissions of the Senate). Anti-Roma racism that had been kept under control during the accession process once again boiled to the surface and now is expressed explicitly without fear of penalties. The fact that this shift in the public discourse could happen so sharply questions and endangers all the positive initiatives taken by the Romanian state in the past two decades, or at least it creates a dangerous context that might legitimise the backlash.

The education of ethnic minorities in Romania is defined in two general frames: policies "for minorities", and policies regarding "the access to education of disadvantaged groups". These are delineated institutionally at the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth: the first is dealt with by the sub-department for policies on minorities, functioning under the General Directorate of the Teaching/ Learning in the Languages of Minorities and of the Relationship with the Parliament; the latter pertains to the General Directorate of Pre-University Education.

Policies for teaching in the languages of minorities are shaped by legacies of the socialist past,[1] and old and new international and European regulations. The frame of the "disadvantaged group" is a later development in Romanian policymaking in the domain of education. It is not necessarily shaped in ethnic terms, but often emphasises a "focus on Roma".

In the specific ethnic minority context, ethnic Hungarian identity politics dominates the field and occasionally functions as a "model to follow" with respect to educational policies, even if differences among ethnic groups are recognised. Why is this so? Generally speaking, we should acknowledge that any type of policy or politics – identity or other – uses the familiar and known elements in circulation as its "building blocks" or reference points. Furthermore, one needs to note that the political participation of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians from Romania (DAHR) is regarded as a success story among other ethnic minority groups. At the same time, this Alliance, through its representatives in Parliament and government, has acted like an agent that "knows" (in the sense of an omniscient "big brother") what needs to be done in terms of ethnic minority rights. Under these conditions, it is no wonder that, between 1996–2000, when the DAHR entered for the first time into the Romanian government and there was no governmental strategy or organisation representing the Roma, governmental ordinances

1 During this period, teaching in Hungarian language was recognised as a right of the Hungarian national minority, though, mainly during the 1980s, it suffered many attacks and cuts.

and notifications regarding Roma schooling were modelled after the Hungarian pattern. This pattern, moreover, was dominated by a cultural perspective: access to school for the Hungarian minority in Romania was about the right of the Hungarians to cultural autonomy, which included provisions for Hungarian-only educational institutions from preschool to the university level, learning of the Hungarian language, Hungarian literature and history, and studying all disciplines in Hungarian. Schooling was considered to be an instrument for the maintenance and development of Hungarian identity, both in an ethnic and a cultural/national sense, as a way of belonging to the Hungarian ethno-nation while also being part of the Romanian civic nation.

During Romania's European Union accession process, different European institutions and other organisations played a major role in defining what needed to be done in Romania in terms of increasing access to school for Roma and general policies for Roma. Strictly monitored during the accession process, the Romanian government developed some general policies for Roma, which had important references to education. Unfortunately, as several evaluations reported, these policies achieved little due to the lack of allocated funds and concrete implementation plans at the local levels (EUMAP 2007: 365–368). A National Strategy for Improving the Condition of Roma, adopted on April 25, 2001 and modified and completed with Government Decision No. 522/19 in April 2006,[2] called for a significant improvement in the condition of Roma through the promotion of social inclusion measures. The Roma Strategy was intended to last for a decade (2001–2010), and complemented by a Master Plan of Measures for the Period 2006–2008 (developed in the framework of the Strategy), so at the moment it has no more relevance. Besides many other issues, the Roma Strategy observed problems related to education, namely: poor school participation in the education system as well as early school abandonment; the tendency to create separate, Roma-only classes; non-involvement of members of Roma communities in programs for school recovery; lack of adequate housing and infrastructure; the high number of unemployed within this ethnic group; and the absence of readjustment or re-qualification and vocational courses for Roma. Evaluations of the implementation of the Roma Strategy were critical, indicating that, at the local level and in terms of central coordination, little progress could be identified.

Altogether, we might conclude that, under the influence of local legacies and global/European regulations regarding ethnic minorities in Romania, the policy discourse on ethnic relations and minority education is framed in three main directions: (1) the assurance of equality before the law, equal opportunities, and anti-discrimination; (2) the formation of an inclusive/cohesive society and desegregation; and (3) the recognition of language and culture-related claims of ethnic minority groups.

2 Government Decision No. 522/19 April 2006, for the modification and completion of the Government Decision No. 430/2001 regarding approval of the Governmental Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of the Roma; Government of Romania, Strategy for the Improvement of the Condition of the Roma (hereafter, Roma Strategy).

Main findings of the Romanian EDUMIGROM research

Our survey was run among 13–14-year-old pupils in nine secondary schools during the school year 2008–2009. The schools were located in two regions of Romania. In particular: (1) in Multiculti town and the neighbouring Sunny village (from Multiculti county, western region) and (2) in Transilvan town and the neighbouring Mountain village (from Transilvan county, northwestern region). The two cities were having similar ethnic composition: they were multicultural settings with significant proportion of Romanians, Hungarians, and Roma, and also with some other ethnic groups like Germans or Serbs. But they were also characterised by dissimilarities in interethnic relations (mostly due to the fact that the proportion of Hungarians is much larger in Transilvan than in Multiculti, so Roma in the former setting might have had experiences of "minoritisation", not only in front of the Romanian majority, but also in front of the local Hungarian minority).

Our qualitative investigation was conducted in three schools from Transilvan town and the related neighbourhoods. This town is one the biggest urban centres of Romania, with a large Romanian majority population, and a quite large Hungarian minority, its history being marked by several geopolitical changes around the Romanian-Hungarian state borders. Politically and symbolically its interethnic map is dominated by the Romanian-Hungarian relationship, while the "Roma issue" entered into public consciousness only recently as a socio-economic problem, or at the best, with the occasion of some festivals, as an exotic cultural presence. Interethnic relations within the town are mostly "peaceful". With the exception of few occasions (like the street celebration of the 15th of March, Hungary's national holiday, when extreme right groups on both sides claim nationalist demands) the Romanian-Hungarian relations flow without major public disputes. There are basically no open conflicts in the Romanian/Hungarian-Roma relations either. Nevertheless, strong Anti-Gypsy prejudices structure discriminatory attitudes towards Roma both in the case of the majority and the ethnic Hungarian population, and by time-to-time (as it happens recently) local administration fosters "urban planning" projects that increase the gravity of Roma ghettoisation and, as such, reinforces marginalisation as source of further discrimination and social tension.

As far as school segregation is concerned, the qualitative school case studies offered us a slightly different picture on this phenomenon than the survey data. While on the basis of the latter, we could not detect significant differences among the students of the same schools, the qualitative methodology allowed us to get a sense of the more subtle relationships and hierarchical orderings that shaped pupils' positions at these educational institutions. We could learn, for example, that the frustrations of teachers, resulting from their marginal position in the broader teacher community due to the positions of their schools in the larger local educational system, could become a source of their discriminatory attitudes towards the children who were causing them so much trouble. Or we could observe that many children with disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, performing badly and being devalued at school, showed

a strong resistance to the school regime: on the one hand, they acted as victims of a self-fulfilling prophecy, but on the other hand, they practiced an agency that made fun of school and of teachers, thus acquiring a respected position in their immediate peer group. And last but not least, we could note that despite sustaining that there was no conscious principle of differentiating among the parallel classes, or between Roma and non-Roma, or between boys and girls, teachers eventually constructed hierarchies among them, and willingly or not, under the pressure of many institutional arrangements, they preferred and valued more positively disciplined communities and individuals with whom they could better perform their teaching duties.

From another perspective, this qualitative research reinforced the main conclusions of our survey: in the case of those schools situated on the poor margins of Transilvan town, the main inequalities between children are not produced by their immediate school environments, but result from a broader regime of unequal (re)distribution of wealth in Romanian society. So the disadvantages faced by Roma children in accessing and advancing in school education should be viewed in the context of the juxtaposition of many factors that in the strict sense are external to their immediate schools: their parents' material conditions (housing, occupational status, school education) and familial and health circumstances; their teachers' professional formation, personal convictions, and positions in the broader educational system; this system's mechanisms of differentiating between schools and sustaining the segregation between "good" and "bad" units, but also the degree of its commitments towards consequently supporting disadvantaged groups and of its financial incentives that might really ensure the implementation of inclusive policies; and the broader socio-economic environment of the market economy and of a general societal crises. As far as ethnicity is inscribed in people's bodies and minds, in face-to-face relations, but also into systems of classification and differentiation – and ways in which institutions function and in which space is divided – it plays a role in shaping one's educational and career. As far as ethnicisation of poverty is an ongoing phenomenon in our society, disadvantaged socio-economic conditions and stereotypical cultural conceptions will continue to reinforce each other and to locate, for example, the Roma children living in poverty in positions that they hardly can change or bypass (structurally being subjected as "Gypsy" because they are poor, and becoming poor because of their treatment as "Gypsies").

The Romanian EDUMIGROM team conducted its qualitative community study in three neighbouring northeastern marginal areas of Transilvan town and in three schools serving these districts. We named them Flower, Water, and Forest districts, served by School 1, School 2, and School 8. Their immediate environment is marked by a mixture of pre-modern/rural and industrial/post-industrial elements. The hybrid nature of the area as a whole can be observed in the housing conditions, but if one would like to identify general patterns that differentiates among cases, than he or she should note that individual houses are predominantly present in Forest district; blocks of flats host Roma from Flower district; and improvised homes mostly distinguish the condition of Roma living in Water district. The investigated territory, on the large, is also characterised by a relatively diverse pallet of occupational

statuses (farmers, petty traders, manufacturers, industrial workers, unemployed, day labourers, and small entrepreneurs), less rooted in traditions than in strategies of survival as reactions to socio-economic conditions.

Developed as industrial zones during socialist times, these areas became highly populated, and linked to this, the investigated particular schools enrolled large numbers of students. The current shrinking of their student bodies might be explained by the collapse of local industries, but also by the fact that schools from downtown established classes at the level of primary education, and as well as by the ageing of the general population According to unofficial estimates, approximately 2,000 Roma live in these areas , today, out of the total of 5,000 Roma inhabiting Transilvan town. Despite these figures, our survey found a low number of Roma children enrolled in the seventh and eighth grades of schools situated in the catchment areas of the selected Roma communities.

Schools	Total number of students	Per cent of Roma students as declared by school	Per cent of disadvantaged students as declared by school	Total number of seventh and eighth graders	Number (and per cent) of self-identified Roma among seventh and eighth graders	Per cent of self-declared Roma seventh and eighth graders in the total Roma student body
School 1	415	24	40	61	8 (13)	8
School 2	273	29	75	42	8 (19)	10
School 8	290	15	40	62	10 (16)	23

Due to the EDUMIGROM research methodology (taking schools as starting points of our investigation) in our research, we focused on those self-identified Roma youth who, in socio-economic terms, were doing relatively better than their peers who abandoned school earlier or never enrolled in school. But these were Roma pupils who attended schools on the cities' peripheries due to their residence in these neighbourhoods, which were, in turn, socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Visiting them at home, we could encounter other school-age children who were not enrolled in school mostly due to the economic shortages their families had to deal with.

This is why one should note that the term "Roma community" used in our analysis does not cover a homogeneous group of people, as far as the latter is shaped by several internal differentiations generated – among others – on the line that separates families living in deep poverty from those with better socio-economic status. The community of Water district (living in improvised homes in an area

harshly separated from the outer world) massively lacks the elementary conditions of a decent life and is pushed to the edges of legality (in terms of housing, labour, or identity documents). Inhabitants of Flower and Forest districts (living in compact groups or dispersed families) were doing slightly better; the block apartments or the houses they owned (or not), in the majority of the cases (often small spaces of one room plus kitchen) besides electricity, did have running water inside, gas supply, and access to sewerage.

However, the studied families shared some major common concerns (even if these had consequences of different severity), among them: living on the margins of the town; frequent changes of address; unemployment and day labouring in the informal economy; low level of school education (which is the lowest in the case of the mothers in their 30s) and difficult access to quality school education; but also higher educational aspirations of/for their children and a desire of integration into the majority society. Last but not least, these families (living in compact groups or dispersed) became a community because they were perceived as "Roma" by the outer world (a term designating a supposedly homogenous entity living in poverty) and shared experiences of unequal treatment and exclusion in different domains of life (labour market, schooling, public health, or housing).

During our qualitative community study we could observe several manifestations of segregation that had an impact on Roma students' schooling practices and experiences. In what follows, I am going to:

- outline some of the macro-structural and policy-related forces,
- highlight processes of detrimental differentiations within and between schools, and
- sketch the cultural conceptions about separation and integration.

These all structure the relationship between segregation and schooling, while transforming differences into inequalities.

Macro-level structural and policy-related forces

Socio-economic conditions

The general trends characterising the conditions of Roma in Romania since 1990 are applicable also in the case of the communities studied here. The collapse of socialist urban industries that formerly integrated the Roma population (even if mainly into unskilled and poorly appreciated jobs) relocated the majority of Roma into the most disadvantaged socio-economic positions. Those who lost their jobs – in many cases due to their low educational level, but generally to the severe decrease of job opportunities – could not reintegrate into the labour market in the long term, and even abdicated to register as unemployed. Those who formerly were able to make a decent living out of their traditional crafts cannot compete today on the capitalist market, but some of them, like the Gábor Roma or the Florist Roma, adjusted their former occupations to this market's demands. The majority of Roma, because they did not possess properties

during the pre-socialist regimes before and during the Second World War, could not benefit from the recent process of restoring property to its original owners. Furthermore, as the conditions of recent economic crises became widespread, many of the domains on which they worked, like construction, collapsed, and the relative condition of impoverished and unemployed Roma grew worse, while the majority's intolerance towards and rejection of Roma increased. Impoverished Roma families' survival strategies cannot structurally support children's long-term school education, so the latter experience the effects of cumulative and structural disadvantages or the vicious circle of poverty.

Residential segregation

The severity of ghettoisation is a factor that produces and maintains differences within the studied communities. The space of a Roma settlement might be a source of both solidarity and support, and of deprivation or even exploitation. We could learn about cases with relatively better socio-economic conditions (like those in Flower district) showing that compact groups of Roma could attract more support in their living arrangements than families who lived isolated from their Roma peers. However, on the overall, Roma families dispersed across the town (and as such integrated into the broader urban community) are doing much better economically then the ones living in Roma colonies on the town's peripheries.

This is because the these colonies are formed and maintained by "attracting" people from or outside town who have lost their apartments and jobs and are desperately looking for solutions to their housing problems and for the support that informal networks supposedly offer. The mechanism of reciprocal assistance might indeed function in some cases and aspects, but it could happen that under these conditions marked by severe shortages, competition for scarce resources, mutual suspicions, and the inability to jointly organise would structure the order of cohabitation. Moreover, as the case of families finding "home" at the rubbish dump in Water district illustrated, people living in encapsulated spaces might become dependents on and at the mercy of local informal leaders and entrepreneurs, who exploit their cheap labour force. The huge difference between the case of the Roma group from Flower district and that from Water district rests in the degree in which the Roma colony transforms into a ghetto, the latter being characterised by an acute isolation from the outer world, as its inhabitants are living and working in the same space, where resources are very limited and children do not have any opportunities for schooling.

Liberalisation of schools' catchment areas

Linked to the socio-economic changes after 1989, Transilvan town's schools are differentiated on the lines among the central, elite, and the marginal "weak" schools. As the principal of one of such schools declared:

This is about segregating schools: those schools that have a low number of students turn out to be schools with pupils struggling with socio-economic difficulties, because well-situated families move their children to downtown schools. They have more material possibilities to support their kids, so these schools become the "good schools". They become overcrowded, and we keep losing children, and also the possibilities of being attractive. And from here it results in the idea that we are "weak schools". This idea then slowly becomes a common ranking.

Despite the recent liberalisation of school enrolment that affords choosing any school regardless of its catchment area, disadvantaged children's choices remain hostage to the chances that their immediate environments really offer them. The choice for the school where the interviewed students are enrolled is inscribed into their austere material conditions and into their perceptions about what they might aspire to as ethnic Roma, and most importantly in the way by which "Roma" becomes synonymous with "poor" and vice versa. All this is even more dramatic in the case of self-identified ethnic Roma who define themselves as "non-traditional", that is, as ones who aim to integrate into and become accepted by the majority society and who, despite this wish, remain – both geographically and socially, and sometimes also legally – on the margins. As a result, the malfunction of catchment areas reinforces the effects of residential segregation.

Educational policies

During the last two decades, educational policies for Roma were marked by at least the following deficits: many times they were only experimental; they were insufficiently backed by governmental financial support; their implementation at the local level was not ensured by consequent measures; they did not clarify the relationship between promoting cultural rights and eliminating socio-economic disadvantages of Roma; they did not enforce interculturalism. Under these conditions, despite its achievements, the institution of the Roma school mediator, the assurance of separate spots for Roma at high schools and universities, the Second Chance Program, the program for Children with Special Educational Needs, the Summer Kindergarten program, the right to learn Romani language or Romani history in schools, or conceiving school segregation as form of discrimination could not structurally improve the access of disadvantaged Roma children to quality school education. In addition, without an intersectional approach and without structural transformations aiming to redress socio-economic inequalities, educational policies do not have the strength to generate sustainable changes. Moreover, during times of economic crises they are endangered by being neglected and cut.

All these deficiencies are also reflected in the new Romanian Law on Education. This includes a chapter on the right to school education in minority languages, an issue negotiated by the Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania and supported by representatives of the Roma Party. But it totally neglects the issue of school segregation, so the ministerial notes from 2004 and 2007 regarding the

eradication of segregation as form of discrimination still remained the only and weak instruments of reference for desegregation policies. At the same time, the new law does not clarify the position of school mediators (it barely states that they offer mediation services, but does not refer to the obligations to or ways of hiring them). Moreover, it affirms that schools might extend their regular curriculum with after-school programs (that could offer remedial education for disadvantaged groups), but it only mentions that the state might support them financially, so it does not offer any guarantee for organising them. As far as special schools or special classes integrated into mass education are concerned, the law keeps the denomination of "children with sensorial, motor, psycho-motor, mental, communicational, and relational disabilities" (the latter being an extremely vague condition), and continues supporting them with free meals and school supplies. The law keeps the programme offered for children with special educational needs integrated into mass education, covering them with so-called "support" teachers. It reduces compulsory education to the age of 16, and in this way endangers children with eight grades by their potential taking of unqualified and heavy jobs on the labour market that might be dangerous for their development. And last but not least, the new law defines attendance in the Second Chance Programme at the age of 14, whereby it excludes younger children to enrol. However, joining into this programme could be a preferred alternative for those adolescents who – due to earlier class repetition – are two to three years older than their classmates, and feel uncomfortable in their current setting where they are often stigmatised and alienated.

Detrimental differentiations within and between schools

Even if the elimination of ethnic segregation in schools would be taken seriously, segregation could be reproduced by other means. Our research observed phenomena like: differentiating between the elite/good and marginal/weak schools; selecting majority children from good socio-economic backgrounds in foreign-language classes starting with the fifth grade, but even grouping them according to their presumed scholarly abilities immediately in the first grade; and then directing socio-economically disadvantaged Roma children to special schools. In each of these cases, it is obvious that the main reason why all forms of segregation should be combated is that they prevent access to quality education, they reduce the chance of competitiveness both in continuing school education and on the labour market, and eventually they reproduce the vicious circle of poverty and socio-economic inequalities. Altogether, school segregation cannot be eliminated without changing many other aspects educational as well as broader social life (like the existence of isolated Roma ghettos). In what follows I am going to briefly outline the consequences of such detrimental differentiations within and between schools.

Teachers who end up teaching at schools classified as "weak" tend to have ambiguous attitudes towards their own conditions and towards the students with whom they work. A school principal told us:

> *It is easy for the "elite schools" to present brilliant results and school performances with children whose families have better socio-economic conditions and are taking*

care of their school education; our satisfaction here is that we can do a good job with disadvantaged children who have material problems and who maybe are neglected by their parents.

Despite the fact that this dedication might be sincere, one may conclude that teachers from these schools do have feelings of inferiority in their relation with their colleagues from the "good schools". Moreover, their frustrations, resulting from their marginal position in the broader teacher community due to the position of their school in the larger local educational system, could become a source for their discriminatory attitudes towards children who were causing them so much trouble. Despite sustaining that there was no conscious principle of differentiating among the parallel classes, or between Roma and non-Roma, or between boys and girls, teachers eventually constructed hierarchies among them, and willingly or not, under the pressure of many institutional arrangements, they preferred and valued more positively the disciplined communities and individuals with whom they could better perform their teaching duties (understood as transmitting knowledge).

In the case of the observed schools, one way of dealing with problems from above was to group students in classes with a foreign-language curriculum, which resulted in the formation of "good" and "weak" parallel classes. Under pressure from the educational system (that evaluates teachers according to the school performances of the best pupils), our schools separated "good" and "weak" classes not necessarily due to their ethnicist/racist and/or classist attitudes, but in order to correspond to the expectations that impregnate the system as a whole. During our participant observations we noted some important differences in the ways in which pupils and teachers treated each other in the case of the "best" and the "worst" classes. Students of the latter were most active to resist the teachers, while the ones of the former had a collaborative strategy of participation. Depending on how individual teachers were acting and how they were perceived by students, even children from the "weak classes" could accept replying positively to teachers' demands (but always with an attempt on their side to disrupt the order imposed by the teachers), while in the "best class" pupils were usually teacher-friendly; even when they were upset they did not bully their teachers who they did not like for whatever reasons. Probably linked to these two different kinds of strategies of participation, there are at least two different sorts of feelings about "being at this school", both on the side of teachers and students. Even if they are open to interactive methods and try to understand children's behaviour in the context of their social background, teachers might be more comfortably satisfied while working with the "good classes", and reducing to the minimum their involvement and demands towards the "weak classes". At the same time, the children from "good classes", being appreciated by their teachers, more often do have good feelings about being at school (or in their assigned class), and they even have extracurricular activities, and not only scholarly talks and events, to share. However, pupils in the "trouble classes", also under the impact of the disagreements coming from their teachers and the dominant system of assessment, might more easily feel that they do not really belong to the school, and they could have a strong impulse to manifest their

resistance to the school's order, reinforcing their sense of belonging to a marginal peer-group. Moreover, absenteeism, early school abandonment, or the avoidance of enrolment might be forms of protest against a school and a system that constantly reminds them that it is not really theirs. The frustration and shame felt by these students due to their socio-economic background, compounded by a generally contestant attitude characteristic of their age, were found to be fuelling the tension in their relationships with the school that erupted from time to time in explicit conflicts.

An even more harmful form of differentiation within and between schools is that of separating children with special educational needs from the "normal" student body. In many cases, these special educational needs do not result from children's mental disabilities but from lacking preschool education or from home environments that are deficient in sources that adequately support children's school performances. From the students' perspective, if the program for children with special educational needs would be run in an integrated form, it could have a corrective impact; however, remedial after-school programmes would be even more successful and better suited to achieving better education among all age-groups in Roma communities. Notwithstanding, the practice of enrolling healthy Roma children into separate special classes or special schools unquestionably results in the transformation of social disadvantages into real handicaps with a long-term impact on people's lives and careers. Children from Water district were and are faced with this problem. By the middle of the 1990s, one of the schools in the area initiated the formation of separate classes for Roma, a project sustained both by governmental and nongovernmental forces, but more or less covertly, these classes were functioning as classes for children with special educational needs. When desegregation became the agenda of the day in the middle of the 2000s, these classes were closed and the vast majority of students were directed towards the separate special school. In some cases parents were not told in time about these changes, but in many cases they accepted this "proposal" due to the free transport and free meals that this school offered to their enrolled students. Once again, material restraints structured the "option" for a path that in the short term seemed to partly solve economic shortages, but in the long-run prevented these children from having decent educational and professional careers.

Cultural conceptions about separation and integration

Besides the structural mechanisms discussed above, the predominant modes of thinking about cultural diversity, separation, integration or (ethnic) mixing, and the existing ethnicised prejudices are also sustaining segregation.

In Romania, by and large, "multicultural education" is based on the idea that ethnic minorities should learn (in) their mother tongues and should have their own educational units. For the Hungarian minority this is an achievement of the politics for cultural autonomy and is a way of cultivating ethnic distinctiveness with pride. But for the Roma minority, as far as it struggles with marginality, exclusion, and discrimination, separation means segregation as long as it involves stigmatisation and lower quality of education.

Besides, our society is characterised by a resistance towards mixing both on the side of parents and on that of schools, while both are legitimising separation by referring to each other's supposed desires. In this context, more fortunate families and elite schools/classes prefer the elimination of the socially disadvantaged from their life-worlds, while the latter might choose being among themselves where they do not need to face humiliation and shame about how they dress, what snacks they bring to the school, or to what degree they might contribute to the schools' or classes' funds.

Our interviews with Roma parents and students show that, in terms of separation or isolation from the outer world, an intergenerational change is going on. The strategy of sharp isolation or enclosure into kinship networks, one such signal of marginality, is less pronounced in the case of youth. In all of the studied cases we observed that younger people had a more powerful desire to comply with the requirements of majority society. They did not interiorise mechanisms of exclusion as profoundly as their parents did.

Behind their general way of discussing "*acceptance of anybody as my friend regardless of his or her ethnicity*", there were some hints in the children's words that signalled a stronger will to open up more towards the outer world than their environment allowed. Andrea from Flower district complained about living in this neighbourhood because "*too many Roma do live here, and I would like to see around myself more Romanians*". She, like her older sister, has a boyfriend from another part of the town, but dislike of her and her sister, Anca, would mean staying in the neighbourhood when she marries. Anca was the only child who stressed that she was proud of being "Gypsy": "*Gypsies help each other, and help the ones who are in a need, offer them food and so on. Romanians don't do that, and they say that we're black, but they go to the solarium to get bronzed, we are naturally bronzed, and this is good*". Andrei, from the same vicinity, told us that he has only two friends and they "*avoid hanging around this building like the other kids do all day long*", and like visiting the far-off after-school educational centre. Aron, who was accepted by her aunt to stay in their apartment alongside eight other persons, was dreaming about times when "*I'm going to have a job and may afford to move out and to have a home of my own*". While protesting against the strong control of her mother, Laura, whose family lived isolated in a Romanian neighbourhood, was happy about having more friends outside her immediate environments (school and home), mostly from the milieu of her older brothers.

The strategies of integration or separation of Roma students observed in Water district differ from those experienced by their parents. There is definitely a youth orientation toward cultural assimilation in the sense of adapting to the challenge of consumerism in today's society. They are open to wider societal values and means of their achievement, so they are more open to the majority. The students' narratives show an ambiguity around their relations with the inner group and interethnic relations. They affirm that they have Hungarian or Romanian friends and colleagues, buddies that get along very well with. But usually meet them only in the school or in public places. These friends, no matter how sincere they are, keep a certain distance from them: they "*never forget that we're ethnic Roma*", as Bianca said. Daniel explained that his friends were Roma, but "*we also get along well with Romanians*".

Interviewed families from Forest district try to organise their living with or next to majority society in a different manner. For older members of the Gábor Gypsy community, staying apart from majority is the accepted norm. For their children, especially for sons who attend school and stay close to the educational system for a longer period, integration serves also as model. The rest of the families from this district are pro-integration. They see successful integration stemming from education. Families with more stable economic and material status want a better and easier life (or jobs like a football player, car mechanic, or waiter) for their children compared to their own hard lives as blue-collar workers. Mobility and better life through work appears as a real and relevant possibility for families living in extreme poverty. In their case, however, perseverance is much more often impeded by the hardships of their existence.

Policies and recommendations

The main issues in post-socialist policymaking to promote schooling for Roma have changed many times in Romania since 1990. Focus has shifted from a wave of interventions like Roma School Mediators; Roma School Inspectors; the learning of Romani language, history, and traditions; the Second Chance Programme; and the positive discrimination measures ensuring separate spots for Roma pupils in lyceums and universities – to the issue of segregation and strategies for desegregation; access to preschool education and summer kindergartens; and inter- and multicultural education. During the past years, in one way or another, all of these initiatives were having an impact on the schools selected for the EDUMIGROM qualitative research. Some of these enterprises (being part of an ethno-cultural paradigm) advocated the recognition of cultural and linguistic rights; while others were "socially-oriented", focusing on the access to school education for Roma as a disadvantaged group.

In the paragraphs from below, we are going to: (a) signal the policy frames of the initiatives regarding school mediators and inspectors, the Second Chance and the Children with Special Educational Needs programmes; focus on the issues of language rights and multicultural education; and highlight policy efforts to eliminate school segregation. This will be followed by (b) an attempt to underscore some of the Romanian particularities that prevent the proper implementation of the existing policies. Last but not least, on the base of the signalled weaknesses of existing policies, (c) our report formulates some policy recommendations regarding the improvement of Roma access to quality school education.

Policy initiatives on Roma school education in Romania

In Romania, Roma school mediators were trained for the first time in 1998–1999 under the scheme of a pilot project entitled "Second Chance for Older Dropouts", initiated by the Soros Foundation Romania

and continued by the Center Education 2000+. This enterprise, together with all the measures meant to improve the development of Roma through the promotion of social inclusion, was sustained by the National Strategy for Improving the Condition of Roma (2001–2010), adopted in April 2001. The Strategy gained considerable European Union funding through the multiyear projects run under the Phare Programme. Due to Government Directive No. 721/14 from May 2004, the position of school mediator was introduced into the Code of Occupations in Romania. However, in reality, the status of the mediator continued to be very confusing. They were hired by schools or by the county school inspectorates as auxiliary personnel. They received very low salaries and faced job insecurity, while performing the difficult work of representing the Roma community at the school and the school within the community, and preventing and mediating conflicts among families and schools. While investing a huge amount of work into this mediation, they were not involved in the decision-making on either side, being perceived by families as parts of the school system, and by the latter as belonging to the Roma community. In May 1998, the General Directorate for Teaching in the Language of Minorities at the Ministry of Education named a Roma School Inspector to function at the ministry. One year later, a ministerial ordinance was launched regarding the hiring of a Roma School Inspector at each county inspectorate. Their real impact depends on their prestige at the inspectorate or at the school, a prestige acquired also due to their informal networking abilities. The Second Chance Programme was initiated by the Center Education 2000+ in 1999 and started in 2000 as an experimental programme. This programme aimed at:

> *[...] preventing the social and professional exclusion of young people from very poor families who have dropped out of compulsory education and have not achieved the minimum competencies for getting a job. The program was initially piloted in eleven schools for 350 students, and was taken over by the Ministry in 2003 and had national coverage through the PHARE program (EUMAP 2007: 369).*

It was supported by funds within a project called "Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, with a Special Focus on Roma", initiated in 2000 by the Ministry of Education and Research and the National Agency for Roma. This project involved four phases, out of which, especially the second phase, without focusing on a specific ethnic group, included activities in twelve counties and aimed, among others, to stimulate enrolment in "Second Chance" local programmes at the primary and secondary levels for those who did not complete compulsory education. In the Romanian educational system, if an individual is two years older than the official age set to enrol in a certain educational level, he or she may not attend school at that level any longer. The Second Chance Programme offers an opportunity for everybody who is in this situation, not necessarily only Roma.

More recently, the Romanian educational system has provided education for "Children with Special Educational Needs", referring to children with physical, sensorial, mental, or behavioural deficiencies and related learning problems, but who are not necessarily mentally disabled. In this sense, this measure is meant to avoid the enrolment of all the "problematic" children into separate special schools, so it is a

measure for inclusive education. The schools and teachers receive some financial incentives if they have such children, for whom they offer extracurricular education as a group at the school or at special centres or other locations, and who might benefit from the assistance of a specialist. However, on a daily basis, as we observed at the selected schools, it is unclear who should be included in this category, and the human and financial resources of schools put a limit to the successful implementation of this measure. The educator or teacher might suggest that a child "has a problem" to an educational psychologist, who in turn might perform different tests, and then send the results to a county committee that decides if the child under scrutiny should be treated as one with special educational needs. Theoretically, as schools are endangered by the decrease of the number of school-age children that determine their funding, they should be interested in recruiting and keeping as many children as they could within their units. However, the success of the Children with Special Educational Needs Programme is doubtful, mostly in terms of what happens to these children during national testing, and after finishing the eighth grade. Altogether, the problem of placing disadvantaged Roma children into the category of "children with special educational needs" at the normal schools or directing them towards special schools has raised critical dilemmas about the capacity of these measures to really improve the access to quality education of vulnerable groups.

The special schools are designated for children with different types of disabilities. If a child fails one grade twice, a teacher may suggest sending him or her for psychological testing. After the fourth grade, normal schools might refuse the enrolment of some children into the fifth grade on the basis of their school behaviour and performances, and might guide them towards special schools. On the other hand, parents might apply for a special school at the moment of enrolling their children into the first grade, and in this case, too, the mentioned test is applied. Based on its results, and with the parents' consent, the child is sent to a special school. Specialists consider that the test in itself is carefully constructed, but its administration might have shortcomings due to the person who administers it. It is also should be mentioned that most recently, as the staff from the studied special school in Transilvan town told us, the criteria of socio-economic risk is also applied during the process of selection into special schools. These schools provide free lunches and educational materials that can be valuable to the household economy of impoverished families as a stopgap, but in the long term they may increase the difficulties these children encounter further along in their school and professional careers. Even if there are some schools of this sort that teach the compulsory national curriculum but in another rhythm and way, usually children finishing these schools are not competitive on national tests, so they cannot continue their studies at *gymnasium*. On the base of the governmental decision from 2005, special schools at the primary level started to function with a renewed curriculum, while education at secondary level was supposed to continue according to an ordinance from 1998. The new curriculum for children with moderate or mild disabilities requires around twenty teaching hours per week, and includes the discipline "Special therapies" (adapted according to particular cases), and a complex educational therapy under

the supervision of a special teacher/educator. Among the selected schools, children from the catchment area of one of the "weak" institutions are more likely to be sent to a special educational unit, especially since – as discussed in the relevant paragraph – applying the desegregation policy raised a good deal of resistance among the teachers here. The other two schools make more effort to integrate (Roma) children from disadvantaged families, and implicitly with bigger learning problems. The most successful in terms of children's recruitment is School 1 (which is also reflected in the extension of its student body), while School 8 tries other solutions for surviving the demographic deficit (like accepting its unification with a nearby alternative educational unit). In Romania, by and large, "multicultural education" is based on the idea that ethnic minorities should learn (in) their mother tongues and should have their own educational units. As such, it lacks the core elements of interculturality. The right to learn in one's native language is a right enshrined in the Constitution of Romania; differentiation by language is not conceived of as a something that generates a disadvantage or segregation. When comparing differentiation by the teaching language of the schools or classes in the case of ethnic Hungarians, on the one hand, and the case of Roma from Romania, on the other hand, we notice several differences.

In the eyes of Hungarians, Hungarian-only school or classes are a matter of cultural autonomy, and as such they are a positive aspect: even if the quality of education at these schools is not necessarily good, or better than in the mixed or "Romanian" schools, this perception is still maintained by teachers, media, and politicians. In the case of Roma, the Roma-only educational units are defined as segregated schools, which effectively offer an education of a lower quality. According to the current official consensus – shared by Roma and non-Roma – schools or classes where pupils study in Romani (e.g., Romani language and history, and rarely, in other disciplines) are not considered as segregated units.

All of our selected schools declared that they offer Romani-language courses. But this was not practiced at each educational level in each school, and was organised differently from school to school. Some of the interviewed children and parents said that they do not see the significance of learning Romani at school, or because children already know it, or because they do not use it anymore. Moreover, they suggested that Romani was not as highly valued as other languages, was not necessarily considered as their mother tongue, and it was even suggested that children learnt it only at school but had no practice at home.

During the approach to 2000, authorities could even "defend" segregationist practices by affirming that they did not understand school segregation as being discriminatory, even if by then research on segregated schools had already shown the negative impact of segregationist practices on the access to education of Roma children.[3]

By April 2004, the Ministry of Education and Research issued an internal regulation, in the form of a notification (No. 29323), recognising and condemning segregation, and calling for collaboration with Roma School Inspectors in developing action plans for desegregation. But desegregation was still difficult to implement for several reasons, including the decentralised administrative structure of the Romania

3 See, for example, Surdu 1998, 2002 (and later on Surdu 2006).

education system and the lack of a strong legislative tool and administrative instrument to punish segregation. School inspectorates were not handling segregation "seriously". As a result, *"segregated classes continued to exist and Roma parents seeking to enrol their children in ethnically mixed schools continued to be directed back to their segregated neighbourhood schools"* (Andruszkiewicz 2006: 6).

In 2006, leading NGOs Romani Criss and Împreuna Agency wrote and submitted an alternative country report to the European Commission, which provides the background on how the issue of segregation was handled in Romania:

> *An official problem acknowledged by the Ministry of Education and Research is segregation of students in ethnic criteria within the educational system. On [20.04. 2004], as result of the civil society and other actors' lobby, the Public Ministry issued Notification no. 29323 that bans segregation of Roma children in the educational system.*
>
> *The Notification condemns segregation as a "severe form of discrimination"[4], and shows that its consequence is "unequal access to quality education."[5] In addition, the Ministry implements projects and programs, such as the PHARE program, Equal access to education of disadvantaged groups, with focus on Roma (2006: 21).*

The report observes that despite the Ministry's official acknowledgment and addressing of this issue, cases of segregation in education are still encountered at the level of schools or classes in different regions of Romania. The report recommends the initiation of a public campaign against segregation in education that should focus primarily on Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth representatives (teachers and school principles, school inspectors, etc.), as well as on Roma and non-Roma parents, and state representatives, civil society, and the general public. At the same time, Roma organisations suggested that the:

> *The 29323/2004 notification for desegregation must be granted greater legal force, by adopting a Ministerial Order or a Governmental Decision; it's necessary that the court of law sanctions the cases of segregation so that a message could be sent: segregation is, in fact, illegal and may be repercussions as result of law violation (ibid.: 22).*

4 Concretely, the Notification stipulates that "Segregation is a very serious form of discrimination. Except for schools/ classes where al subject matters are taught in Romani language, segregation in education involves the intentional or unintentional physical separation of Roma from the other children in schools, classes, buildings, and other facilities, such that the number of Roma children is disproportionately higher than that of non-Roma compared to the ratio of Roma school-age children in the total school-age population in the particular area" (Romani Criss 2004: 21).

5 Segregation has as consequence the unequal access of children to quality education. Separation in kindergartens and schools leads invariably to a lower quality of education in the groups, classes or schools with other ethnic majority of school population (ibid.).

Later, in 2007, Romani Criss identified and documented other cases of Roma school segregation and presented them to the National Council of Combating Discrimination. The National Council defined cases of discrimination in two villages from Harghita County, at a school from Dolj County, and at two schools in Craiova. Following this, in February 2007 Romani Criss initiated a Memorandum of Cooperation regarding the access of Roma youth from Romania to an education of good quality through school desegregation (Romani Criss 2008). This document was signed by the Ministry of Education, the National Agency for Roma, the National Council for Combating Discrimination, OSCE/ODIHR, Roma Centre Amare Rromentza, the Intercultural Institute from Timisoara, Save the Children-Romania, the Regional Centre PER, and the Foundation Ovidiu Rom. All of the co-signers committed themselves to the elaboration of a strategy regarding desegregation.

As a result, the Ministry of Education adopted Ordinance No. 1540/19.07.2007 regarding the prevention, elimination, and banning of school segregation of Roma children, and in doing so, defined segregation as a serious form of discrimination that has negative impacts on the access of children to an education of good quality. The Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth then adopted Order No. 1539/19.07.2007 on the hiring and activity of School Mediators, and Order No. 1529/18.07.2008 on the development of the issue of diversity in the national curriculum. The anti-segregation Ordinance states that those who are not respecting its prerogatives will be sanctioned accordingly. Later, Romani Criss, in partnership with the National Council for Combating Discrimination, recommended to the Ministry of Education that the latest Ordinances concerning cultural diversity, the banning of segregation, and the need to offer courses about intercultural education to school teachers by introduced into legislation on pre-university education. At a press conference organised by Romani Criss on 23 July 2008, under the title of **"Roma Children Want to Study – Say No to Segregated Schools"**, it was pointed out that Romania still has schools or classes that are exclusively or predominantly comprised of Roma pupils. Organisers of the press conference noted that they had documented 27 such cases in 2008.

It is worth noting that a form of financial incentive that is linked to integrated education has been introduced in Romania. In 2005, the Ministry of Education introduced a merit salary for teachers at the amount of 20 per cent of the minimum wage for a period of four years, starting in July 2006. The Order specifies desegregation activities among the eligible activities for which a merit salary can be awarded. However, this incentive provides an option, but not an obligation, for desegregation – that is, schools/school authorities may choose not to take advantage of this form of reward. At the same time, a problem remains that in Romania, government efforts aimed at eliminating the physical separation of Roma and non-Roma children have been developed and implemented in the framework of separate projects. They are not necessarily coherent, nor do they inherently entail the revision of legislation and policies that would ensure the sustainability of particular project activities. Altogether, the implementation of existing regulations made evident the limitations of non-binding school desegregation measures. Schools that were entirely segregated or had some form of segregation have been able to refuse to undertake desegregation actions.

Obstacles in the implementation of policies for Roma

During the past two decades, Romanian public policies in the domain of Roma schooling could not result in the systemic and sustainable improvement of equal access and quality education of socially disadvantaged and culturally devalued groups. Even if by the middle of 2000s, Romania could have been positively acknowledged for its pioneering initiatives (like the Roma School Mediator, or the assurance of the possibility to learn the Romani language in schools), several institutionalised particularities have prevented the *de facto* equalisation of chances for Roma in this country:

- The former socialist welfare state – due to the combination of the communist ideology with nationalist party-state politics, and due to the severely stressed economy and assimilationist policies towards Roma – could not ensure equal citizenship rights and could not eliminate the persistence of anti-Roma attitudes (the combination between ethnocracy and public patriarchy resulted in the "equality" of citizens as far as they were equally lacking private property, but even within this "equality" inequalities among different social categories, national minorities and ethnic groups persisted, also due to the way pre-socialist legacies shaped the by-then socialist present);
- The post-socialist transformations (including the impoverishment of many; the way in which the state understood to make amends to its citizens by restoring former properties and how it orchestrated privatisation, neglected public housing, and failed in its redistributive role; but as well as the degree to which different national minorities managed to gain powerful political representation) created new inequalities and reinforced the multiple disadvantaged positions of Roma, from where it became more and more impossible to benefit from their *de jure* rights;
- The late accession of Romania to the European Union, and the fact that the country was on the top of the blacklist regarding "Roma issues" and had to prove its readiness to solve it according to the most recent European recommendations, forced the state to make advanced legislative and institutional efforts on this domain; but (due to the socialist legacy of duplicity, or the practice of living in the official world of what is prescribed and in the real world of everyday life at the same time; due to the fact that European monitoring stopped as Romania became a full member of the European Union; as far as the decentralisation process advanced; but also due to the high level of poverty that characterizes the whole country and the state) the implementation of legislation meant the "adaptation" or even perverting of the rules according to local power relationships;
- The impoverished part of the majority, both in the sense of its material conditions and (lack) of self-respect and dignity, shares its experiences with the destitute Roma and in many cases might not pay attention to ethnic differentiations within the socially disadvantaged, which might increase the acceptance of policy provisions for Roma;

but in different situations the vulnerable majority population feels a strong need to express its distinctiveness from the disadvantaged Roma (the recent transnational manipulations of and national reactions to the "confusion" created between "Roma" and "Romanians" enforce in many the desire to protect the "lost dignity of Romanians" and to racialise differences even within impoverished groups; or the "too much money for Roma" concern sustained by the media strengthens the sense of injustices lived by Romanians who, "in their own country" have to observe the "unfair privileges" that Roma are supposed to benefit from);

- Romanian policies (for Roma) do not implement into their internal logic a mainstreaming, integrated, and intersectional approach; they do not correlate the redistributive and recognition strategies; they are not sustained by structural transformations in terms of redressing socio-economic inequalities; they are not completed by anti-racist interventions, nor by changes in the cultural evaluation of the ethnic other and of sharing joint social spaces, and at best, they might only achieve isolated and immediate results.

Recommendations

While identifying mechanisms of segregation but also of integration at schools and in their broader context (as our research reports did in their subsequent chapters[6]) we observed the negative impact of the former on the access to quality education and life conditions, and the advantages of the latter in terms of interethnic mixing and improving the circumstances of livelihood. Consequently, our policy recommendations should regard both the neutralisation of the sharp isolation of "Roma community" and the strengthening of exchanges between different social and ethnic groups, while sustaining the desire to nurture those particular elements of their identities that Roma children and parents are proud of. Altogether, educational policies should support the access to quality education of all children, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic condition, which would ensure them both a decent life and cultural recognition. They should guarantee both equal opportunities and cultural recognition for all, while effectively facilitating everybody's right to negotiate on the acceptable social order within and outside the school.

Acknowledging the weaknesses of the Romanian educational system in these aspects, below we sketch out a few principles that would need to be respected if these aims from above would be accepted:

- Strengthening the governmental ordinances as regards the elimination of school segregation and assuring actual desegregation;
- Combating, on a societal level, the phenomenon of isolation and ghettoisation as responsible factors of the unequal distribution of resources;

6 Available online: http://www.edumigrom.eu.

- Promoting intercultural and anti-racist education and joint programs for children with different ethnic backgrounds as core elements of school curriculum and extracurricular activities;
- Promoting cooperative relationships between families and schools, and also among families with different ethnic and social backgrounds;
- Training teachers on issues of social inequality and marginalisation, and on ways in which these produce disadvantages that might urge them to reconsider and avoid culturalist and racist explanations of differences;
- Promoting on a societal level the value of cultural diversity and respect for the "other", parallel with the recognition of the value of cultural exchanges and respect for the right to mix with "other" cultures;
- Acknowledging, both financially and symbolically, the work of teachers who deal with disadvantaged groups;
- Supporting by all the means the integration of disadvantaged children into mass education (by consequently sustaining the jobs of school mediators and the running of the after-school programmes and the Second Chance Programme);
- Allocating funds for material support (free lunches, transport, school supplies) of disadvantaged students enrolled in mass education.

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